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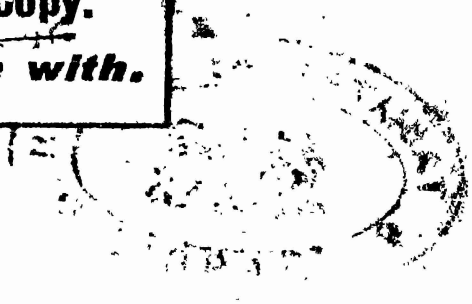

MEMORANDUM

FOR THE GUIDANCE OF OFFICERS

IN THE SECRETARIAT.

Bengal.
1923

GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

Finance Department.

The attached memorandum is intended for the guidance of officers of all ranks in the Bengal Secretariat. It should be read with the Secretariat Instructions, and its purpose is the collection and presentation in a compact form of those rules for the systematization of Secretariat procedure and the elimination of superfluous work which are found to be most frequently neglected or infringed.

A copy of this memorandum is to be given to every gazetted officer on first appointment to the Secretariat.

A. MARR,

Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

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MEMORANDUM.

In paragraphs 455, 456 and 457 of their Report the Bengal Retrenchment Committee remark that there is ample room for a detailed and systematic overhaul of the machinery of Government and that if all that is superfluous in work could be swept away, there would be more and better work done at a smaller cost. So far as the Secretariat is concerned, the superfluity arises largely from a disregard or neglect of the Secretariat Instructions and a want of effective supervision over the working of the various offices.

2. Secretaries are responsible for the due observance of the Rules of Business and the Secretariat Instructions, which are intended to secure uniformity of system and the despatch of business, and their attention is invited to the following supplementary orders in respect of Secretariat procedure which aim at—

(1) the stricter observance of the existing rules,

(2) the elimination of superfluous work,

(3) the more methodical and prompt disposal of cases.

3. The primary duties of an office are (*a*) to put up papers promptly, (*b*) to put up papers completely, (*c*) to be accurate, (*d*) to comply with orders promptly, (*e*) to draw attention to salient points with reference to previous papers, departure from previous orders or standing rules and regulations, neglect of the same and the like. Office notes are regulated by the instructions in paragraph 133 of the Secretariat Instructions. The shorter office notes are kept the better. This saves trouble and expedites disposal. Prompt and efficient disposal is the best criterion of good Secretariat work. In matters relating to the judging of the facts on papers sent up, the office is to put up the papers promptly, properly reference with regard to any standing orders, previous history and precedents. They are not to judge of the rights or wrongs of the matter. (132 & 133.)

4. Special care should be devoted to the opening of fresh files. There have been cases where more than one subject has been dealt with in one file. Work of this nature does not give the Government of India or the Secretary of State a favourable impression of Secretariat work. Head Assistants aided by dealing Assistants and the Head Reference Clerks must pay special attention to this. On the other hand unless this work is done with discrimination there will be a wrong impression of the number of files opened and current in the department, likely to form the basis of incorrect deductions as to staff required and the volume of work in comparison with other departments. Unnecessary labour is also involved in registering, recording and indexing, etc. (110—112.)

Relevant papers, instead of being together, get scattered through different files and are apt to be overlooked.

(116-117.) 5. All references in notes to slips should be cited in the margin and not in the body of a note, as in the former case when the papers come to be recorded these purely transitory letterings get printed up and become meaningless, while even in a current case they are vexatious and troublesome. Ordinarily not more than one reference slip should appear on one proceedings volume, references to papers within that volume being made by citing the slip and page number of notes or correspondence.

(130.) 6. The use of the second person is prohibited in all notes. References to other departments or heads of departments shall be in the

(140.) third person. It should be the aim of every officer of the rank of Assistant Secretary and upwards to record a note which will either of itself dispose of the case or will dispose of the case after mere endorsement by his superior officer.

(131.) 7. No letter or case should be submitted with more than one note from the office or from each branch that may have to deal with it. The Head Assistant often supplements the dealing Assistant's note and where it is necessary to amplify or alter the first note, it should be recopied and only one note sent up. Two notes on a file lead to a waste of the officers' time.

(132.) 8. It must always be assumed that the paper under consideration will be read by the officer to whom a case is submitted. This rule, if not enforced, leads to a waste of the clerk's time, printing and so forth. Head Assistants must unhesitatingly prune all repetitions or *précis*, where necessary.

(143.) 9. Proceedings should always be arranged in chronological order. They are far more easily found in this way, if properly flagged, and the tendency, because an old proceedings has an important paper in it, to place it at the top should be checked.

10. There should not be any underlining and side lining of papers in files. If page numbers and references are properly given (*e.g.*, A/2, B/3, meaning flag A, page 2, etc.), marking in pencil is unnecessary. It makes files untidy and after a time confusing, as when references are looked up in old papers the eye is caught by underlinings and marks which have reference to old cases and not to the matter under disposal.

(144.) 11. Routine note sheets should be used for routine orders. It only complicates the regular note and order sheets to have them filled with petty routine references.

(145.) 12. Special care should be taken to weed out superfluous proceedings and papers from files before submission to higher authority. This is of extreme importance in connection with cases travelling to

and from Darjeeling. Head Assistants and Head Reference Clerks should pay special attention to this rule in the interests of economy.

13. Page numbers should always be given in note sheets, and the file headings should always be given correctly so that they may be clear, intelligible and valuable for the purpose of indexing. (126 & 147.)

14. The tendency to abuse the "urgent" and "immediate" slips should be checked. Properly speaking, the latter means that a case so marked should be attended to by the recipient without delay, or at any hour of the day or night. The improper use of these slips depreciates their value. (154-155.)

15. When the special thanks of Government are to be communicated to any one, it is expedient that His Excellency should be aware of the fact; otherwise the recipient might express his gratitude to His Excellency over a matter of which the latter was ignorant and the value of the appreciation to that extent might be diminished. These considerations should be borne in mind, and each case judged on its merits. (After 181A.)

16. It happens not infrequently that orders in the course of communication, through the official channels to the officers for whom they are ultimately destined, are recopied in every successive office through which they pass. When the orders are lengthy and important or a large number of copies are required, they are issued in print in accordance with the provisions of rule 192 of the Secretariat Instructions, and the required numbers of spare copies are supplied to the Heads of Departments and Commissioners of Divisions for communication to the officers subordinate to them. This is not the case in respect of typewritten orders issued to the Heads of Departments including Commissioners of Divisions. In future when it is clear that a Head of a Department or a Commissioner of a Division to whom an order is addressed will forward a copy of such order to one of his subordinate officers, a duplicate copy should be sent with the original typewritten order and the fact noted in pencil on the latter. The order to "issue in duplicate" must always be given by the Head Assistant or Assistant in charge of the file whoever marks the case for issue, but in the event of their failing to do so, the co-operation of the Issue Section is necessary. (192.)

17. Telegrams should be worded as briefly as possible. (231.)

18. Attention should be paid to recording proceedings at a convenient stage, or as soon as a definite stage in the proceedings is reached at which this can be done. Head Assistants are responsible for observing punctuality in recording, and rules 138(1), 235, 236 and 249 of the Secretariat Instructions must be strictly enforced. (235-236.)

(237—245.) 19. Endeavour should always be made to speed up the disposal of cases. If Departments, Commissioners or Heads of Departments delay unduly in answering, routine reminders should not be issued but the special attention of the Secretary should be drawn to the case, and if it is a very bad one, it should be brought to the notice of the Hon'ble Member or Minister.

(138 & 246.) 20. A fertile source of waste lies in the printing of the various endorsements between different officers and departments. These endorsements in print are unnecessary and a waste of labour, paper, etc. All endorsements should be on the margin outside the line in the note sheets, and all such entries should be cancelled before printing.

Unnecessary writing and signing in the circulation of papers between departments and between Members of Council should be avoided. When a file has to go to another department it is sufficient to write in the margin (with date) the name of the department. It is not necessary for anybody to sign such a note, still less to record an order. This will have been done in the notes already on record which ordinarily conclude with some such remark as " The Finance Department may now be consulted," etc.

Similarly when a file is in circulation in Council it is unnecessary for anybody to endorse it by name to each Member personally as His Excellency's order to circulate covers this, and the ordinary order of circulation is known to the office. When a case goes to His Excellency, unless it is proposed to submit a *précis* along with it, it suffices to mark P.S.G. in the margin of the note sheets.

(269.) 21. References to other departments or Heads of Departments shall ordinarily be endorsed to the department or officer by his official designation and not by name, except in the special cases mentioned in the last paragraph of section 280 of the Secretariat Instructions. If the opinion of a department is required, the reference should be to the department, not to one of its officers, either by name or designation.

(289.) 22. Heads of Subordinate Departments are required to deal personally with cases upon which they are consulted unofficially by the Secretariat and should not refer such cases to their subordinate officers without special permission. Files often come back in such cases with notes by subordinate officers. This rule should be enforced with more strictness, and Head Assistants should draw the attention of Secretaries to its violation.

(294.) 23. His Excellency has drawn attention to the fact that on more than one occasion files should have gone to the Finance Department before submission to His Excellency. This causes delay and should be avoided.

24. Secretaries should personally bring to the notice of His Excellency the Governor any departure from these instructions. Each assistant is expected carefully to study these instructions, as also those in the Rules of Business and the Secretariat Instructions. Serious notice will be taken of failure to comply with them.

25. These instructions should be shown to all new officers when they join as Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, or Special Officers.

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